

South Dakota State University

Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange

SDSU Extension Fact Sheets

SDSU Extension

1967

Flood!

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_fact

Recommended Citation

South Dakota State University, Cooperative Extension, "Flood!" (1967). *SDSU Extension Fact Sheets*. 920. https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_fact/920

This Fact Sheet is brought to you for free and open access by the SDSU Extension at Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in SDSU Extension Fact Sheets by an authorized administrator of Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. For more information, please contact michael.biondo@sdstate.edu.

FLOOD!



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

FLOOD!

PREPARATION FOR A FLOOD

FLOODS do an untold amount of damage each year, but with a little preplanning their effects can be cushioned and cut to a minimum. The following is a list of steps for a flood preparedness plan.

1. Make the preparedness plan with members of your family sitting in and helping, so that each person will know what to do — and quickly — when the time comes.
2. Watch and listen — floods are quiet and can sneak up faster than you realize. Listen to radio broadcasts and work quickly.
3. Move important things, as time allows, to higher ground. These items might include food, furniture, appliances, rugs, and clothing.
4. If time allows, remove motors from refrigerators, deep freezers, washing machines, etc., and move to higher ground.
5. Don't forget the "couldn't-do-without" items of your family — medications, spectacles, diet foods, equipment, and proper clothing. Make a list ahead of time and have it handy.
6. Collect valuables, legal papers, etc., and take them with you. These should be in a handy spot in case of any kind of disaster.
7. Turn off all electrical service at the main utility pole and at each building.
8. Turn off all gas appliances and close the valve at the tank or meter.
9. To keep your basement free of silt and mud, try filling it with clean water before you leave.
10. Turn off the water at the meter.
11. Leave all building doors and windows open to help prevent flood waters from shifting or floating them away.
12. REMEMBER — evacuate as soon as possible. The water may not be in the house yet, but the avenue of escape may be cut off. Floods are treacherous and can fool a person.

FLOOD CLEAN UP

THE CLEAN-UP procedures after a flood are many; however they can be simplified by following a few efficient steps for rapid and safe recovery:

1. Arrange for shelter, food, clothing, transportation, medical supplies, and hospitalization for the sick and injured of your family and neighbors.
2. Obey health regulations given by your Red Cross or local health department for personal and community protection against epidemics.
3. Start clean-up of premises as soon as flood water recedes. Remove doors, clean and dry the house before trying to live in it.
4. When entering buildings, use flashlights but not matches (gas may have leaked into the house), do not turn on electric lights, furnaces, or fixtures until tested by an electrician.
5. Test plumbing for leaks and pluggage. Have sanitary disposal system inspected by Health Officer.
6. Have water supply tested. Boil or purify drinking water supply. Use no food that has been contaminated. Destroy fresh or frozen foods that have come into contact with flood waters.
7. Do not pump or drain your basement too soon. The additional pressure of saturated ground may cause basement walls to collapse.
8. Get stoves and heaters to work as soon as possible. Clean sediment from these and other machines before it dries too much.
9. Take all furniture and rugs out of doors and spread out to air thoroughly.
10. Start cleaning all bedding and clothing as soon as possible.
11. Delay permanent repairs until buildings are thoroughly dry and settled.
12. Control insects and rodents. These cause much spread of disease.
13. Avoid over-exertion and strain. It is important to work fast, but not so fast you over-exert yourself and cause illne

SALVAGING WATER-DAMAGED BELONGINGS

CLEANING UP AFTER A FLOOD OFTEN MEANS facing many new problems of salvaging your family's belongings. Problems, such as mildew, which once seemed small, suddenly become much greater. Many items must be salvaged immediately even though for temporary use. Whether your entire home is flooded or the basement alone is filled with water, the following information can help you restore your possessions to usefulness.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Before attempting to reclaim any flood-covered belongings, you should guard against three dangers to your personal well-being:

1. Contamination from disease bacteria in water or food. Tap water and many foods may not be safe to use.
2. Injury from the collapse of structures weakened by flood waters. Be sure buildings are safe to enter.
3. Electrical shock from open or broken wiring, especially under wet conditions.

SAVING DAMAGED FOODS

Foods You Can Use

Flood waters carry filth and disease bacteria from sewage systems, backed-up swamps, and barnyards. The only flood-damaged foods that are entirely safe to salvage are those in sealed metal cans. However, such containers must be carefully cleaned and disinfected before opening.

Items You Should Discard

1. Destroy fresh fruits and vegetables, foods, medicines, and cosmetics in cardboard containers and other packages that are not airtight and have been in contact with flood waters.
2. Destroy the contents of glass jars if the containers have been covered by flood waters. Capped jars cannot be satisfactorily disinfected.
3. Destroy the contents of your home freezer if the freezer has been covered by flood waters.

CLEANING CLOTHING AND BEDDING

After brushing off all loose dirt, remove as much mud as possible by rinsing in cool water; then wash. Be sure to use enough detergent to keep the finely divided soil from redepositing on the fabrics. Add a disinfectant to some phase of the laundry cycle.

Removing Mildew

Drying in the sun helps to remove mildew stains. If the stain persists, use lemon juice and salt or household bleaches. Test bleach on seam or hem before using. Do not use chlorine on silk or wool.

Care of Bedding

1. Mattresses soaked with flood water are generally damaged beyond use and should be discarded.
2. Feather and synthetic pillows can be washed, but not kapok or cotton.

SALVAGING FURNITURE

Drying Furniture

1. Take all wooden furniture outdoors and remove as many of the drawers, slides, or other working parts as possible. Do not force the drawers with a screwdriver or chisel from the front. If necessary, cut off the back and push out the drawers. Clean off all mud and dirt.
2. Take all furniture indoors and allow it to dry slowly. Furniture left in the sun to dry will warp and twist out of shape.

Removing White Spots

1. Furniture that has not been submerged may have developed white spots or film from dampness. Cigarette ashes rubbed in with the finger-tips are often effective in removing white spots.
2. If the whole surface is affected, try rubbing with a cloth wrung out of turpentine or camphorated oil. Wipe dry at once and polish with wax or furniture polish.

Mildewed Upholstery

1. First, remove loose mold from outer coverings of upholstered articles and mattresses by brushing with a broom. If possible, do this outdoors to prevent scattering mildew spores in the house. Vacuum clean the surface to draw out more mold. Do everything conveniently possible to dry the article; use an electric heater and a fan to carry away moist air. Sun and air the article to stop mold growth.
2. If mildew remains, sponge lightly with dilute alcohol or a thick suds of soap or detergent, being careful not to wet the padding.
3. Where molds have grown into the inner part of an article, send it to a drycleaning or storage company for thorough drying and fumigation.

Rugs and Carpets

1. Dry rugs and carpets quickly and thoroughly.
2. Clean by sweeping or using a vacuum cleaner. If necessary, shampoo with a light-duty synthetic detergent or a commercial rug shampoo. Dry the carpets as quickly as possible after shampooing by circulating warm air from a fan or vacuum cleaner attachment.

SALVAGING FLOORS AND PLASTERED WALLS

Repairing Buckled Floors

1. Floors will probably be badly buckled after the accumulation of mud has been shoveled away. Do not repair until they have fully aired. Open doors and windows wide enough to give good ventilation, but maintain a temperature of 50° to 60°F., or higher.
2. When the house is dry, it may be possible to draw some of the buckled flooring back into place with nails. Remove humps by planing or sanding. Such floors may never look good enough to be used uncovered, but a smooth floor can serve as a base for a new covering.

Plastered Walls and Wallpaper

1. Let plaster dry thoroughly before washing. Brush off loose surface dirt. To wash a painted wall, use water with mild soap or commercial cleaner. Wash from the floor up and do ceilings last.
2. Wallpaper that has been wet may have to be removed. It may be possible to repaste some loosened sections. To clean wallpaper, use a purchased putty-like cleaner. Some wallpapers are washable.

RESTORING MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT

Electrical Fixtures and Appliances

1. Do not turn on a light or appliance until a competent person has inspected wiring and equipment. When entering a still-wet, flooded home, wear rubber gloves and boots. Turn off main switches for each building, being careful to stand on a dry board. Remove fuses for extra safety.
2. All lighting fixtures that were submerged should be removed and checked. Clean outlet boxes, wiring and sockets, but do not remove electrical connections or disconnect wiring.
3. Floor and table lamps should be completely dis-assembled and cleaned. Fabric-covered extension cords and others that are not in excellent condition should be thrown away.

Motors

Do not try to operate refrigerators, washers, dryers or other household motors until they have been checked by a competent person. Motors must be clean, dry and free running before the current is turned on, or they may be ruined.

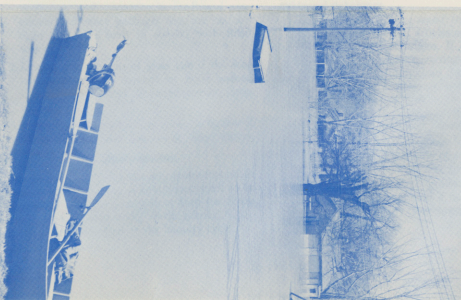
Propane or Butane Gas Installations

Contact your local dealer before attempting to use your range, water heater, or furnace. Have a competent serviceman examine burners and controls and check for gas line leaks.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

More detailed information on restoring your house to a livable condition and reducing your losses can be found in "First Aid for Flooded Homes and Farms," Agriculture Handbook No. 38, published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and available through your county extension agent.

FLOOD!



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Reprinted with permission from
Michigan State University Ex-
tension Service publications RD-
A2 and RD-A-17.

Cover photo—Technical Information Branch, U. S. Army
Corps of Engineers

Based on furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914
in cooperation with the USDA, Helen D. Hall, Director of Cooperative Extension Service,
South Dakota State University, is hereby authorized to reproduce and distribute this publica-
tion without regard to age, race, color, religion, sex, handicap or national origin. An Equal
Opportunity Employer.
No. 102-1-5087-444-69-74-70-1-000 reprinted at estimated 6 cents
800-370-6116-6116